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(56) Documents cited

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GB A 2051454

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GB A 2150728

GB 1587058

GB A 2146855

GB 1124095

(58) Field of search

G5C

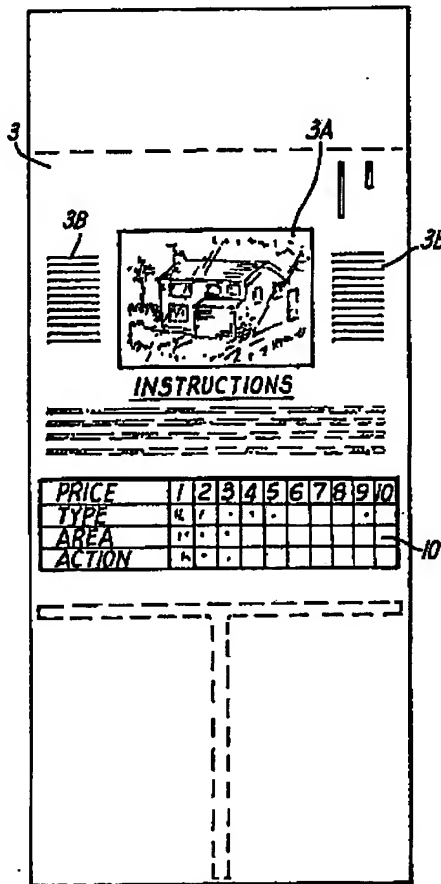
G5R

G4A

Selected US specifications from IPC sub-class G09F

(54) Information display unit

(57) Estate agents' information about properties is normally only available during normal office hours. Only restricted information is available at other times. The invention provides a unit which provides full details of properties at all times and which can also accept instructions from interested persons. The unit includes a video (1), a monitor (3), a selector (4) and a printer (5). The unit is activated by a coin or card operated mechanism (2).



Fr. 1

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The drawings originally filed were informal and the print here reproduced is taken from a later filed formal copy.

The claims were filed later than the filing date within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1982.

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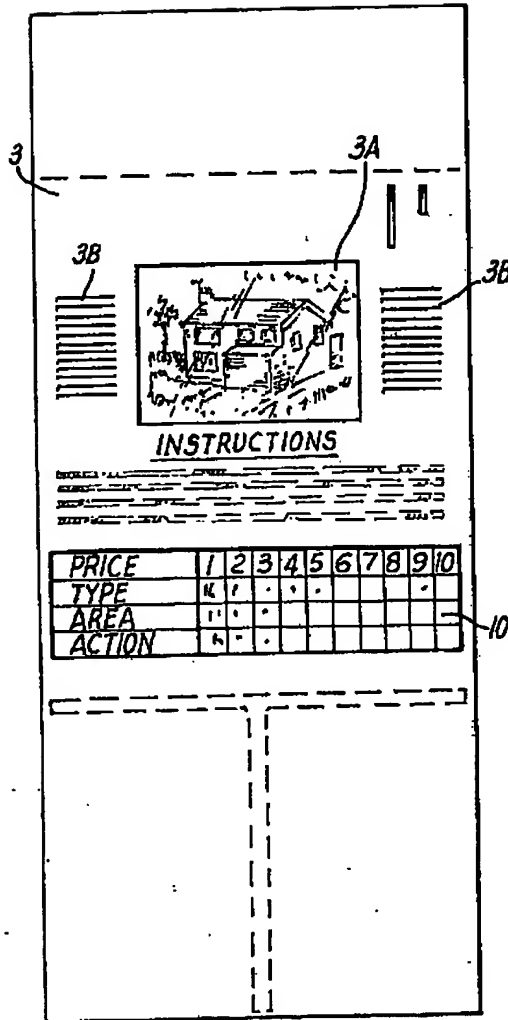


FIG. 1

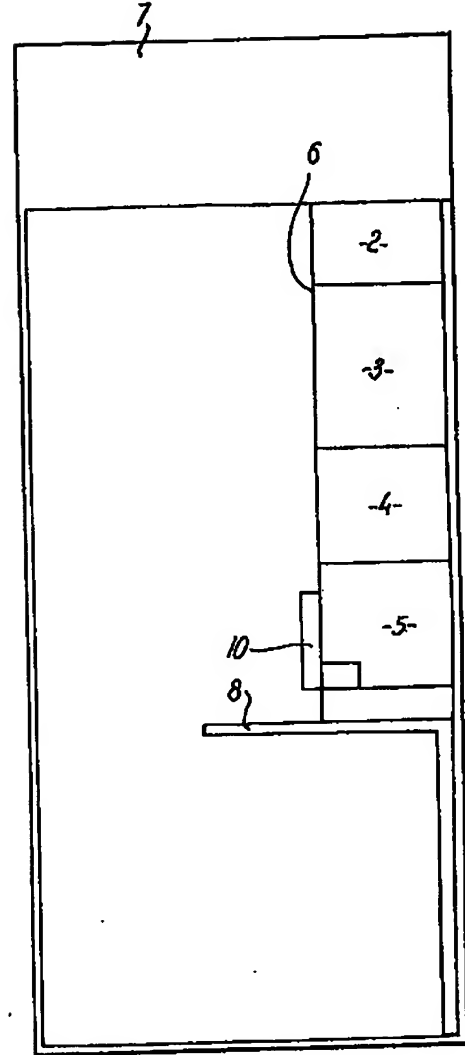


FIG. 2

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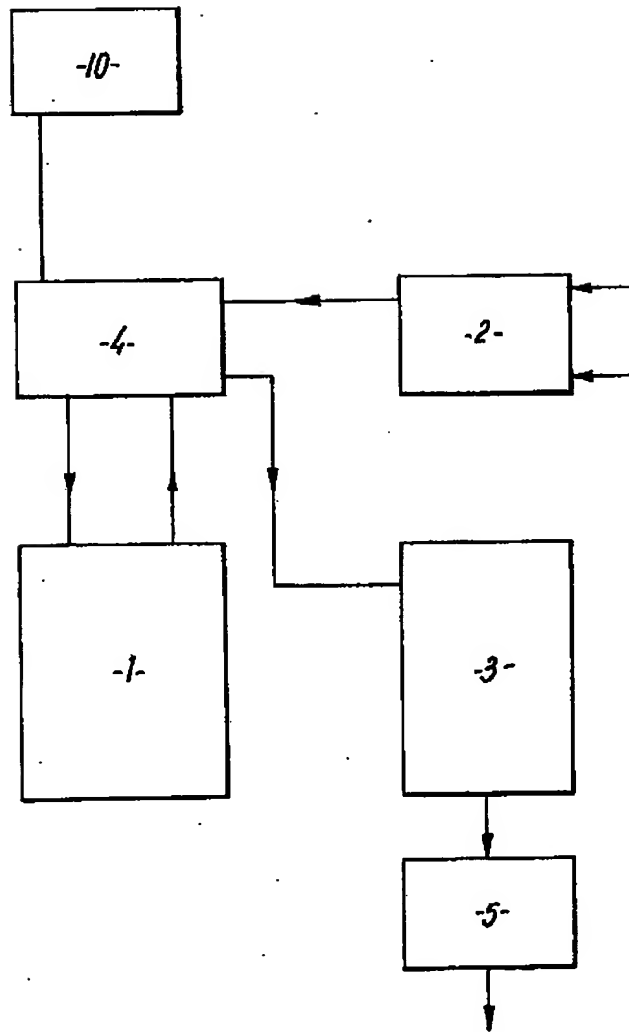


Fig. 3

SPECIFICATION

Information display unit

5 The present invention relates to an information display unit, particularly, but not exclusively, for estate agents and the like.

At the present time, the normal manner of information display in estate agents is by way of brochures or leaflets usually supported on racks generally codified by reference to a single parameter such as price. These are available to intending property purchasers during office hours, but not during non-office hours. During non-office hours, some offices display details of some properties for sale on a carousel which is disposed for continuous rotation in the office window so that properties are consecutively presented to a person standing outside the office in front of the window. These details are necessarily limited usually to a picture of the property and the property price. During non-office hours, therefore, the information which present arrangements provide is inadequate.

According to the present invention, there is provided an information display unit comprising means for storing information in discrete packets, means for codifying the packets by reference to at least one of a number of parameters associated with the packets, means for selecting at least one of the packets by reference to at least one of the parameters and means for displaying the or each packet so selected visually.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the means for storing information comprises a video tape or disc. The means for codifying the packets comprises signals representative of the parameters chosen. These may be disposed at the head and/or tail of each packet of information. The means for selecting may comprise means for reading the signals and means for identifying the desired packets in accordance with the parameters chosen. A coin or card operated mechanism may be provided for activating the means for selecting. The means for displaying may comprise a monitor (cathode ray tube) adapted to receive the video signal from, for example, the tape or disc produced by a tape or disc player. The unit may be housed in a vandal proof container constructed generally of heavy gauge steel.

In order that the invention may be more clearly understood, one embodiment thereof will now be described by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:—

Figure 1 is a front elevational view of one form of video information unit according to the invention,

Figure 2 is a side elevational view of the unit of Fig. 1 in partial section, and

Figure 3 is a block circuit diagram of the

unit of Fig. 1 and 2.

Referring to the drawing, the unit, which may be mains or battery supplied, comprises a video or disc player 1, a coin or card operation mechanism 2, a monitor 3 having a screen 3A and speakers 3B, a selection device 4 and a printer 5. These are encased in a heavy gauge steel container 6 which is disposed in a booth 7 approximately seven feet tall by three feet wide by three feet in depth constructed in reinforced synthetic plastics material. the booth incorporates a shelf 8 which may be used on a support for the taking down of details from the unit, should a print out not be desired.

The units encased in the container 6, are electrically connected together as shown in Fig. 3.

In operation, on receipt of a coin or card, a signal is sent to the device 4 to activate the selection mechanism. The operator feeds in information via a keyboard 10. This keyboard is disposed at the front of printer 5 and incorporates three rows of ten keys which enables the property being sought to be chosen by reference to the desired parameters of price, type and area. A further row indicates what action is required for example whether inspection of a property is desired. This may be transmitted to a recording machine via a telepheline. A plurality of individual videos appropriate to the number of properties available for display may be contained on one video tape or disc identified by signals corresponding to the above mentioned parameters. These signals may be read and identified by the device 4.

On receipt of the keyboard information, the videos are those properties which meet the parameters selected on the keyboard are selected and the corresponding video signal fed to the monitor for display. If desired, the displayed information may be printed out on the printer 5.

It will be appreciated that the above embodiment has been described by way of example only and that many variations are possible without departing from the scope of the invention.

For example, each property could have its own individual tape or disc identified by reference to parameters already described. One or more of these tapes or discs would be sequentially selected for display in accordance with the parameters chosen.

CLAIMS

1. An information display unit comprising means for storing information in discrete packets, means for codifying the packets by reference to at least one of a number of parameters associated with the packets, means for selecting at least one of the packets by reference to at least one of the parameters and means for visually displaying the or each

packet so selected.

2. An information display unit as claimed in claim 1 wherein the means for storing information comprises a video tape or disc.

5 3. An information display unit as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the means for codifying the packets comprises signals representative of the parameters chosen.

10 4. An information display unit as claimed in claim 3 wherein the signals are disposed at the head and/or tail of each packet.

15 5. An information display unit as claimed in claim 3 or claim 4, wherein the selecting means comprises means for reading the signals and means for identifying the desired packet in accordance with the parameters chosen.

20 6. An information display unit as claimed in claim 5, wherein the selecting means is activated by a coin or card operated mechanism.

7. An information display unit as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the display means comprises a monitor adapted to receive a video signal.

25 8. An information display unit substantially as described herein with reference to the accompanying drawings.